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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES
COOPERATING.

STATES RELATIONS SERVICE,
OFFICE OF EXTENSION WORK, SOUTH,
(Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work),
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOYS' CLUB WORK.

The members of the Boys' Corn Clubs in the Southern States have made demonstrations beneficial to their communities at a time when great damage was being done by the cotton-boll weevil. Their object lessons have been equally potent during the period of depression incident to the European war and low-priced cotton. The boys who joined these clubs during the first year expressed a desire to be demonstrators because of the success of their fathers as such. So many thousands of boys have followed the example of the pioneers in club demonstrations that nearly every community in the South has had its boy champion, whose influence has spread for miles around. Many a manly, ambitious boy has formed new purposes and started out with a broader vision and brighter purpose because of his local success. The object lessons furnished by the State prize winners have attracted the attention not only of the Nation but of the whole world.

Boys' Corn Clubs have been conducted in the Southern States for six years by the United States Department of Agriculture, the agricultural colleges, and other cooperating agencies. During this time 1,751 boys have each produced more than 100 bushels of corn to the acre. Of that number, 26 each produced more than 200 bushels per acre. Some of the most conspicuous records are:

Record of seven boys producing over 200 bushels of corn per acre.

Name of club member.	State.	Yield per acre.	Cost of production per bushel.
		Bushels.	*Cents.*
Jerry Moore	South Carolina	$228\frac{3}{4}$	42.0
Junius Hill	Alabama	$212\frac{1}{2}$	8.6
Eber Kimbrough	do	$224\frac{3}{4}$	19.8
Ben Leath	Georgia	$214\frac{5}{7}$	14.2
J. Jones Polk	Mississippi	$214\frac{9}{10}$	21.4
Bennie Beeson	do	$227\frac{1}{6}$	14.0
Walker Lee Dunson	Alabama	$232\frac{7}{10}$	19.9

It is interesting to note the following statistics in regard to the 100-bushel boys.

Number of corn club members in the Southern States who have raised 100 or more bushels of corn to the acre each year from 1909 to 1914, inclusive.

1909	52	1913	374
1910	171	1914	354
1911	327		
1912	493	Total	1,771

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The opportunities are just as great now as ever for these and other boys to make similar reputations for themselves and for their States. The needs are just as urgent and the possibilities are greater. It is simply a matter of the club members using the knowledge and training which they have received in the proper development and expansion of the good work which they have already begun.

PLANNING THE WORK.

All good farming must be carefully planned. The time has come in the boys' club work when there must be a continuing program. There must be gradation, adaptation, and rotation. While there will necessarily be some variation and diversification in the crops grown in the different States, there should also be unity and harmony in the general plan of work undertaken in all of the States. While the corn club boys from Maryland to Texas have been working under a great variety of conditions and diversity of climate, there has been an elbow touch and a unity of purpose throughout the whole organization. It is very essential that these things be preserved in the evolution of a general plan and in its administration.

Nearly 60,000 boys enrolled in the boys' clubs for 1915. Each one of these boys had an acre in corn, or such crops as kafir, milo, and feterita, which are substitutes for corn in western Texas and Oklahoma. Every one of these boys should own, feed, and care for one or more farm animals. Club members should demonstrate the growing of pigs, calves, colts, lambs, and kids, depending upon the demands, conditions, and needs in various sections and localities. Of course, it will be all right for a group of boys to organize themselves into a pig club or a baby-beef club if they wish to. However, that organization should not be detached from the general plan of boys' farm clubs for a whole county or State.

SOIL BUILDING AND ANIMAL FEEDING.

The club members who have grown their acres of corn and secured their live stock should immediately take up the question of how best to use the acre of land which has been in corn and also how to feed their live stock most economically. They should practice soil building and animal feeding. Whatever animals a boy may own, some good grazing will have to be provided. The boys who are growing pigs would make a great mistake if they were to pen up the pigs and feed away the corn to them. It would not be a balanced ration for the pigs and the meat would cost more than it could be sold for. The acres which have been in corn should be seeded to small grain or legumes. In some sections it will be better to sow the acre to a cover crop for grazing and to be turned under in the spring. Following this treatment, prize acres of cowpeas, soy beans, or peanuts might be grown. In other sections it will be advisable to seed together such crops as rye and crimson clover, rye and bur clover, or vetch and oats. Hundreds of boys in some of the States have already made fine demonstrations with crimson clover. They have taken more pains with the inoculation than the average adult farmer does. The result is that they have taught the important lesson of soil inoculation in their communities. Perhaps it would be a good idea for a boy to put one-fourth of his acre in clover or vetch and the remainder in rye, oats, barley, or wheat. If he decides to plant clover, only a small area should be undertaken until inoculation is secured. Inasmuch as he is manipulating this acre for the sake of feeding his live stock and of improving the soil he might further subdivide it and put one-fourth of an acre in rape or some other crop to be used exclusively for grazing purposes. In counties where potato clubs are undertaken, one-eighth of the acre can well be devoted to potatoes. Summer legumes and annual grasses for pasture, hay, and humus will be in order for the remainder of the acre or the whole acre after the winter crops are taken off. When this acre is put into corn again in the rotation, the boy will have a fine opportunity to observe the effects of the different crops on the improvement of the soil. Under this plan boys who make large yields will

doubtless be able to repeat on the same acre. It should be a matter for serious thought that the boys who have produced the large yields have not been able to "come back," when they use the same land the second year. By following a simple two-year rotation, combined with live stock feeding, the boys will continue to get large yields and at a low cost.

There are several thousand boys in the 15 Southern States who are members of the pig clubs. Under the stimulation and encouragement of public-spirited business men, some of these boys have started into the hog business without having grown any crops to feed the pigs. Every one of these boys should promptly select his acre and begin with the small-grain and legume crops. He should have some grazing for his pigs just as soon as possible. He has really entered the farm club work without passing through the first grade. He may, however, join the classes at the stage of advancement, for he will get an opportunity to do the corn club work when the class takes up that subject again. By growing his pig and his feed crops the land is prepared for good work with corn during the second year of his club membership.

ROTATION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF CROPS.

The smaller boys, during the first two years of their membership in the clubs, will have enough to do to handle one acre at a time and care for their live stock. It will be better for these boys to exchange small grain, hay, cowpeas, clover seed, or some of their other crops for enough corn to feed their live stock than to overcrop themselves by farming two or three acres just for a limited amount of corn. Some of them might grow just enough corn for feeding purposes, but the average boy, by helping his father with the larger crop of the farm, can get feed corn for one year in exchange for his labor and help. It will be good training for the boys to use their intelligence and resourcefulness along this line. It is more important to demonstrate profitable soil building and animal feeding in the South now than it is to try to make large yields of corn every year, especially as the corn demonstrations in the rotations will be so much more effective. The older and more advanced boys might farm two acres at a time. One acre will be in corn while the other is in small grain and legumes. Of course, the crops on these acres will alternate. In this way a boy might compete for corn club prizes every year, but it is recommended that prizes be offered also for the live stock, for the legumes, and for the small grain. If the club member uses his small-grain crop for grazing and for turning under, he can compete for prizes on such crops as peanuts, beans, peas, and lespedeza. There are hundreds of communities, throughout the South, where prizes on these crops and on crimson and bur clover and vetch would do a vast amount of good. Club members have a fine opportunity to demonstrate the best methods of harvesting seed from such crops. They can make a fine profit on such enterprises. Prizes might be offered for yields of seed and also for hay. Where prizes are offered for the production of small-grain crops, the club members should see to it that the summer legume crops following are plowed under for soil improvement.

In semiarid sections this program will have to be still further modified and adapted to climatic conditions. Corn, if planted at all, may be alternated with peas or soy beans. The small-grain crops may be emphasized to good advantage. Club members in such sections can do some fine demonstration work with kafir, milo, and other corn substitutes, and in live-stock feeding.

BENEFITS, HONORS, AND AWARDS.

Toward the close of the second year, in most sections, preparation should be made to plant the acre to corn again. A club member who has followed this plan for two years will know a great deal more about corn production and farming in general than he did when he was a freshman in the work. He will doubtless be able to make a fine yield at a low cost of production and the quality of his corn should be greatly improved. He will be better able to write a history of

his crop which will reveal his knowledge of the whole plan of work which he has been following for three years. At the close of the third year he may repeat his rotation if he expects to remain in the club, but most of the boys will be going away to high school or college after they have done three years' work. It is recommended, therefore, that the boy prepare his acre thoroughly and seed it to perennial clovers and grasses or alfalfa. Such a course carefully followed and such a piece of work thoroughly done will make the club member a benefactor in his community even after he has left home to better prepare himself for further service to his fellows. He will leave a worthy memorial to his perseverance and skill which will also be a magnet to draw him back to the farm.

It will be a good idea to award a certificate of recognition, honor, and distinction to every boy who completes three years' work. Such a certificate should be signed by the highest authorities of the colleges and States and should be awarded at a public meeting of the whole county boy's farm clubs. All corn club members with 100-bushel records, at limited cost, should continue to receive diplomas and badges as "All-star club members." Great care should be exercised in establishing and proving such yields.

DUTIES OF CLUB AGENTS AND COUNTY AGENTS.

In view of the varying conditions existing in the several States, the responsibility for the selection of the different crops under this plan and for the detailed instruction of the club members must rest with the State club agents and the various county agents. It will be necessary to work the matter out carefully for every county. The club agents and the county agents should prescribe the course in the county and have the club members compete in carrying it out. Of course progressive school officers, teachers, and business men will cooperate as heretofore in helping and encouraging the boys in their worthy enterprises.

This is demonstration and not experiment work. The boys should have such advice and aid as will practically insure success with proper effort. Frequent letters and frequent visits will be necessary. These should come from State and county agents. Of course the college and department authorities will cooperate in every possible way to help the club members.

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Approved:
Bradford Knapp, *Chief.*

(Issued December 18, 1915.)

WASHINGTON : GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1915